



4180 E Sand Ridge Rd. | Morris, IL 60450
800.435.1636 tel | 800.767.7605 fax
sales@primuselectronics.com
www.primuselectronics.com

Journey to the “Bottom of the World”

July, 2011

Jerry Rosalius, Midwest Antenna Systems

Primus helps support yet another International Ham Radio DXpedition. This time to the “Bottom of the World,” and the very remote South Orkney Islands in the Antarctic Seas.

Thirteen ham radio operators from the United States, Canada, Singapore, and Tajikistan (in Central Asia) traveled by air and met at the most southern sea port of the world, in Ushuaia, Argentina. There they loaded a ship with supplies and continued their 5 week adventure to Signy Island, South Orkney, Antarctica.



After a year of preparation, the operators made a long and somewhat dangerous journey to provide ham radio operators a unique opportunity to make two-way contacts with one of the rarest

countries/entities on the DXCC World List. All equipment needed to be shipped from the states, including high performance HF transceivers, RF power amplifiers, laptop computers, 14 antennas, thousands of feet of coaxial cables, and shelters. Generators, fuel, food, and other necessities, were supplied by our chartered ship, the “Braveheart” based out of New Zealand.

The “Braveheart” voyaged three weeks to get from New Zealand to Argentina in order to accommodate the expedition. The owner of “Braveheart” Nigel Jolly, his two sons, and four other crewmen provided the expedition with world-class support. Once the expedition embarked from Ushuaia, they had a five day voyage south and east across the renowned “Drake Passage,” one of the most dangerous seas on Earth. The almost 1,000 mile voyage south and east was rough, but not unbearable. Large icebergs were avoided, thanks to the onboard radar.



Once Signy Island, South Orkney was reached, the Braveheart anchored about ¼ mile offshore. A zodiac (or motorized rubber boat) was used to move equipment and manpower ashore. The team split into groups all having important and necessary jobs to complete, but first and most important were the assembly of two shelters. Antennas and coaxial cables were installed over a 15 acre area. Six complete stations were assembled inside a 12' x 25' Antarctic-rated shelter. Four 6 kw generators ran continuously to supply power for the operation for 2 weeks, only to be shut down for a couple of oil changes.



4180 E Sand Ridge Rd. | Morris, IL 60450
800.435.1636 tel | 800.767.7605 fax
sales@primuselectronics.com
www.primuselectronics.com

The 13 operators split into 2 teams. Each team operated in 8 hour shifts, keeping 5-6 radios on different radio bands and modes going around the clock. Each operator got 16 hours a day “on the air.” Voice communication was on single side band (SSB); high speed Morse code (CW) was the most productive mode, and radio teletype (RTTY) was also used. After 2 weeks on the air 24 hours a day, the team had made 63,643 contacts worldwide.

All contacts were logged on laptop computers and the logs were downloaded to our web site every 24 hours. Iridium satellite phones were used very successfully for downloading the logs fast and efficiently, and to communicate with family and business associates. After 2 weeks on the island, everything had to be disassembled and transported back to the “Braveheart.” The site where the camp had been needed, appeared as if no one had been there, per agreements.



After a safe return voyage across the “Drake Passage” and a celebration in Ushuaia, all team members returned safely to family and friends. Primus supported the expedition with Andrew CNT-400 coaxial cable, connectors, and connector installation tools. Even with the cable laying on sharp rocks, constant “seal traffic,” and inclement weather, the cable & connectors performed flawlessly. The expedition highly recommends this cable for any use. We want to thank Primus again for their support of another successful DXpedition to a very remote location.

The VP8ORK DXpedition was largely supported by the Northern California DX Foundation. Many other ham radio foundations and clubs worldwide, including the local Kankakee Area Amateur Radio Society also contributed. DX Engineering supplied antennas, Elecraft supplied seven world class K3 transceivers, and ACOM supplied high power HF RF amplifiers. To read more about the DXpedition, visit www.vp8o.com and click on the photo album update. Once there, click on the different links to view the radio operation, the wildlife, and the landscape of the South Orkney DXpedition.

